

RANKIN COUNTY YOUTH COURT

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Tom Broome, Rankin County Court Judge
Paul Bowen, Court Administrator

SUBJECT: Respond to Coronavirus Disease

DATE: 3/16/2020

As of the writing of this memorandum, The Mississippi Supreme Court has issued two emergency orders dated March 13, 2020 and March 15, 2020. Some of those instructions include; 1. Courts should continue normal business matters as much as possible, 2. Courts shall not permit gatherings of more than 50 people beyond the persons involved in the day-to-day operations of the courts, 3. Individual judges have the discretion to postpone any trials on their own docket scheduled through May 15, and 4. Each judge conducting drug intervention courts is authorized to modify the scheduling of drug testing and home-supervision visits for the next 60 days as they see fit.

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS:

The Youth Court office will continue to provide services without interruption; however, we must reduce unnecessary risks to ensure the safety and welfare of our clients and staff.

Emergency, Shelter and/or Detention Hearings will be conducted by the Court so as to minimize risk to the juvenile(s), parent(s), current custodian(s), law enforcement, attorneys, child protection workers, GALs, Sheriff Department Employees, Police Departments and Court Staff. To that end, all persons will be asked to provide contact telephone information and email contact information so that the Court can initiate telephonic conferencing with the appropriate parties. In person appearances will be restricted to only those parties who have been ordered by the Court to appear. Only authorized parties shall come to the courthouse and no other persons shall appear without receiving approval from court personnel.

Attorneys should contact the court clerk or administrative staff before appearing. Hearings will be conducted telephonically to reduce the risk of exposure. The Youth Court is currently seeking additional alternatives including online video conferencing services (GoToMeeting or Zoom). When that service becomes available, the Rankin County Youth Court Facebook and Rankin County website will provide additional information for usage.

No group events will be sponsored by Youth Court or hosted in the Youth Court facility until further Order of the Court.

Employees, attorneys, and any persons who have symptoms of respiratory illness should stay home and not return until they are fever free (+100.4° F) for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. If you were directed to appear by the Court and you have any problems, symptoms or have been exposed to anyone that is ill, please notify the Court at (601) 824-2545 or by email at youthcourt@rankincounty.org and await further instruction.

If an employee or client is confirmed to have COVID-19, they should notify the Court Administrator. Others will be informed of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the courthouse but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Those exposed to COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

As required by the Rankin County Board of Supervisors: All county offices will remain open unless closure is approved by the Rankin County Board of Supervisors.